

LAKE WANAKA

New Zealand's 4th largest lake is 45km in length and 300m in depth and was created by glaciation over many thousands of years. The terminal moraine of this ancient glacier is where Wanaka township is situated today. As the glacier retreated it left this beautiful lake with it's many bays, inlets and islands. The two largest islands, Mou Waho and Mou Tapu are both nature reserves and conservation areas. Mou Waho Island is home to the re-introduced flightless Buff Weka. The Clutha River runs out of Lake Wanaka and to sea on the east coast and is the largest river by volume in New Zealand. The local rivers along with Lakes Wanaka and Hawea provide great fishing opportunities for trout and salmon.

Wanaka has a current population of 6,500.

Tourism and farming are the main industries in the Wanaka area.

MOUNT ASPIRING NATIONAL PARK

The Matukituki Valley is one of the main gateways to the Mount Aspiring National Park, the 3rd largest in NZ. Covering an area of 355,000 hectares it encompasses over 100 glaciers of which the largest are the Bonar and Volta Glaciers on the slopes of Mt Aspiring *Tititea*.

The pinnacle of the park is Mount Aspiring or *Tititea* (translates as "steep peak of glistening white") which stands at 3,030m. Also known as the Matterhorn of the South because of its similarity to the Matterhorn of Switzerland is much loved by local and international climbers and photographers and is the highest mountain outside of the Mount Cook National Park. This park is known for its diverse landforms and rich abundance of flora & fauna. Much of the park is remote and inaccessible so the view from above reveals many hidden gems and is an unobtrusive way to view the landscape.

FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK

Fiordland National Park is the largest in New Zealand covering 1.2 million hectares. Its world heritage status is due to its landforms, natural values, unique habitat, flora and fauna,

with over 700 plants found only in Fiordland. It is home to some of the rarest of New Zealand birds. The Takahe, for example, is a large flightless rail related to the more common Pukeko. It is of ancient lineage and poorly adapted to cope with introduced predators. The Takahe was thought to be extinct until re-discovered in 1948. Fiordland was also the final refuge of the worlds only flightless parrot, the nocturnal Kakapo. A recovery programme has been established for these unique birds on a number of pest free off shore islands. The rare Mohua or Yellowhead is also resident in some Fiordland and Mt Aspiring National Park Valleys.

Fiordland is renowned on world standards for it's extreme weather patterns with rainfall of 7-8m annually and in some places exceeding 10m. Compare this to the Otago Region, only 60km away with as little as 300mm per year.

MILFORD SOUND PIOPIOTAHU

Milford Sound - (technically a fiord) was carved out during the last glaciation period some 20,000 years ago. The top 5m layer of water is fresh due to the high rainfall. It is named after Milford Haven in Wales and the Cleddau River which flows in to it also has a Welsh namesake. The Maori name for Milford Sound '*Piopiota*' translates to 'first native thrush'. Milford Sound runs 15km inland from the Tasman Sea and is surrounded by sheer rock faces that rise 1,200m or more on either side. Lush rainforests cling precariously to these cliffs while seals, penguins and dolphins frequent the waters.

MITRE PEAK

Mitre Peak at a height of 1692m (5560 ft) is one of the highest mountains in the world that rises directly from the ocean floor.

RAINFALL

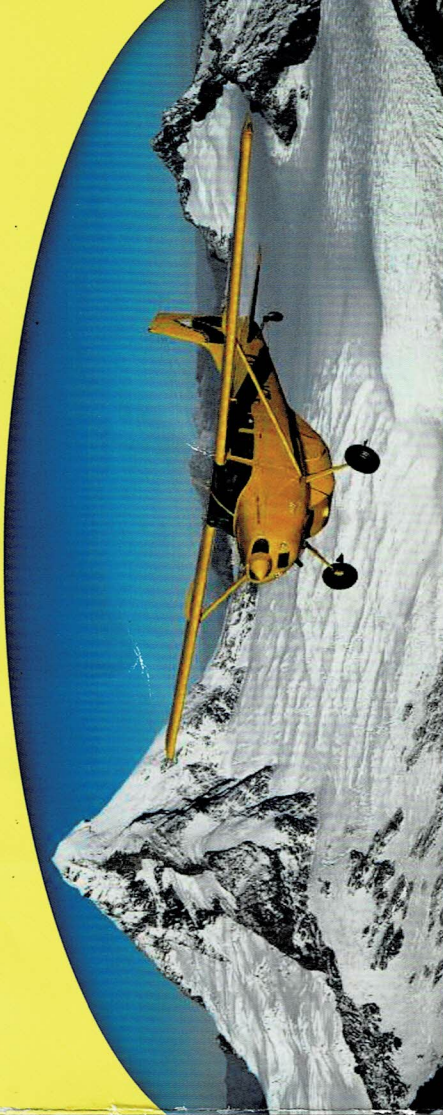
With a mean annual rainfall of 6,813mm on 182 days of the year, a high level even for the West Coast, Milford Sound is known as the wettest place in New Zealand and one of the wettest in the world.

FLIGHTSEEING ENDORSED



FLIGHT GUIDE

Milford Sound Flight



WELCOME TO WANAKA NEW ZEALAND

Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to share this spectacular and diverse landscape with you on your scenic flight with Southern Alps Air from Wanaka to Milford Sound. Relax and enjoy views of one of the most pristine wilderness areas anywhere in the world. Recognition of the outstanding natural values of this area was granted by UNESCO in December 1990 with the formation of the Southwest New Zealand World Heritage Area. Known to Maori as *Te Wāhipounamu* (the place of greenstone), the area includes *Aoraki Mt Cook*, *Westland Tai Poutini*, *Fiordland* and *Mount Aspiring National Parks*,

covering 2.6 million hectares. World Heritage is a global concept that identifies natural and cultural sites of world significance. That is - places so special that protecting them is of concern to all people. Discover the secrets of the South West New Zealand World Heritage Area with us.

New Zealand is relatively young in geological terms. The Southern Alps which we cross on our scenic journey are made of Schist in the east and Greywacke and Granite in the west. The Alps were formed by two tectonic plates (the Indo-Australian and Pacific) colliding around 50 million years ago.

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